AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended):   An image-forming system, employing an image-forming apparatus having a removable cartridge possessing a memory element, comprising:

    a reading component for reading information from the memory element; and

    an executing component for executing processing for providing a benefit to a user based on information read by the reading component, wherein

    the information read is one of user support information, for supporting use of the image-forming apparatus and a URL of a site, on a communications network, possessing the user support information; and

    the executing component executes processing for supporting the user based on the read information.

2. (canceled).

3. (currently amended):   A method for providing a benefit comprising:

    a reading step wherein information is read from a memory element attached to a cartridge used by an image-forming apparatus;

a processing step wherein processing for providing a benefit to a user is executed based

on the information read at the reading step; and

a benefit providing step wherein a benefit is provided to the user based on the results of

the processing executed at the processing step, wherein

the information read at the reading step is one of user support information for supporting

use of the image-forming apparatus and a URL of a site, on a communications network,

possessing the user support information; and

processing for supporting the user is executed at the processing step based on the read

information.

4. (canceled).

5. (currently amended):   An image-forming system, employing a host apparatus and an

image-forming apparatus which are mutually connected, comprising:

a replaceable cartridge possessing a memory element being installed in the image-

forming apparatus, and lottery determination data for determining whether something has been

won being stored in the memory element;

a reading component for reading the lottery determination data from the memory

element;

a lottery determination component that uses lottery determination data read by the

reading component to determine whether something has been won; and

a prize awarding component that performs processing for awarding a prize to a user in

correspondence to the results of a determination carried out by the lottery determination

component when the results of such determination indicate that something has been won.

6. (currently amended):   TheAn image-forming system according to claim 5 wherein the

prize awarding component records data indicating that something has been won in the memory

element of the cartridge when the results of a determination carried out by the lottery

determination component indicate that something has been won, as a result of which the user is

made able to receive the prize upon exchange of the cartridge therefor.

7. (currently amended):   TheAn image-forming system according to claim 5 wherein the

prize awarding component provides the user with information indicating that something has been

won when the results of a determination carried out by the lottery determination component

indicate that something has been won, as a result of which the user is made able to receive the

prize by notifying a prescribed organization of the information indicating that something has

been won.

8. (currently amended):   AnThe image-forming system according to claim 5 wherein prize

data, being the prize itself or data for obtaining the prize from a prescribed prize awarding

organization , is stored in the memory element, and

the prize awarding component reads the prize data from the memory element when the

results of a determination carried out by the lottery determination component indicate that

something has been won, and uses the prize data to award the prize to the user.

9. (currently amended):   The~~An~~ image-forming system according to claim 5 wherein the

lottery determination data is win-or-lose data that indicates directly whether something has been

won, and

the lottery determination component determines directly from the win-or-lose data

whether something has been won.

10. (currently amended):   ~~An~~The image-forming system according to claim 5 wherein the

lottery determination data is encoded lottery data, and

the lottery determination component determines whether something has been won by

performing prescribed processing on the encoded lottery data.

11. (currently amended):   An image-forming system, employing a host apparatus and an

image-forming apparatus which are mutually connected, comprising:

a replaceable cartridge possessing a memory element being installed in the image-

forming apparatus, and prize data, being a prize itself or data for obtaining a prize from a

prescribed prize awarding organization , being stored in the memory element;

a component that determines whether something has been won in connection with use of

the image-forming apparatus or the host apparatus, and reads the prize data from the memory

element and uses the prize data to award a prize to a user when the results of that determination

indicate that something has been won.

12. (currently amended): The~~An~~ image-forming system according to claim 11 wherein the

prize data comprises at least one species selected from among the group consisting of image data

serving as a prize itself, image-forming apparatus driver information serving as a prize itself, a

keyword or password which must be supplied to a prescribed prize awarding organization in

order obtain a prize, and a URL of a network site which awards a prize.

13. (currently amended): An image-forming system, employing a host apparatus and an

image-forming apparatus which are mutually connected, comprising:

a replaceable cartridge possessing a memory element being installed in the image-

forming apparatus, and usage data indicating an amount of use to date of the image-forming

apparatus or the cartridge being stored in the memory element;

a reading component that reads the usage data from the memory element; and

a prize awarding component that performs processing for awarding a prize to a user in

correspondence to the usage data read by the reading component.

14. (currently amended):   AnThe image-forming system according to claim 13 further

comprising a component for preventing repeated awarding of prizes based on the same usage

data.

15. (currently amended):   An image-forming system, employing a host apparatus and an

image-forming apparatus which are mutually connected, comprising;

a replaceable cartridge possessing a memory element being installed in the image-

forming apparatus, and data which comprises at least one species selected from among the group

consisting of a URL of a network site which awards a prize, a keyword or password which must

be supplied to a prescribed prize awarding organization in order obtain a prize, image-forming

apparatus driver information serving as a prize itself, and image data serving as a prize itself in

consideration for use of the cartridge being stored in the cartridge memory element;

a reading component that reads the data from the cartridge memory element; and

a prize awarding component that uses data read by the reading component to perform

processing for awarding a prize to a user.

16. (currently amended):   TheAn image-forming system according to claim 5, 11, or 15

further comprising a component for performing processing to prevent repeated awarding of

prizes in connection with the same cartridge.

17. (currently amended):   An image-forming apparatus in an image-forming system, wherein

a host apparatus and the image-forming apparatus are mutually connected, comprising;

      a replaceable cartridge possessing a memory element storingstoreing lottery

determination data for determining whether something has been won; and

      a reading component for reading the lottery determination data from the memory

element, as a result of which the image-forming apparatus makes it possible for the image-

forming system to use lottery determination data read by the reading component to determine

whether something has been won and perform processing for awarding a prize to a user in

correspondence to the results of that determination when those results indicate that something

has been won.

18. (currently amended):   An image-forming apparatus in an image-forming system, wherein

a host apparatus and the image-forming apparatus are mutually connected, comprising:

      a replaceable cartridge possessing a memory element storingstoreing prize data, being a

prize itself or data for obtaining a prize from a prescribed prize awarding organization; and

      a reading component for reading the prize data from the memory element, as a result of

which the image-forming apparatus makes it possible for the image-forming system to determine

whether something has been won in connection with use of the image-forming apparatus or the

host apparatus and use the prize data to perform processing for awarding a prize to a user when

the results of that determination indicate that something has been won.

19. (currently amended):   An image-forming apparatus in an image-forming system, wherein

a host apparatus and the image-forming apparatus are mutually connected, comprising:

a replaceable cartridge possessing a memory element <u>storing</u>storeing usage data

indicating an amount of use to date of the image-forming apparatus or the cartridge; and

a reading component for reading the usage data from the memory element, as a result of

which the image-forming apparatus makes it possible for the image-forming system to perform

processing for awarding a prize to a user in correspondence to the usage data read by the reading

component.

20. (currently amended):   An image-forming apparatus in an image-forming system, wherein

a host apparatus and the image-forming apparatus are mutually connected, comprising:

a replaceable cartridge possessing a memory element <u>storing</u>storeing data which

comprises at least one species selected from among the group consisting of a URL of a network

site which awards a prize, a keyword or password which must be supplied to a prescribed prize

awarding organization in order obtain a prize, image-forming apparatus driver information

serving as a prize itself, and image data serving as a prize itself in consideration for use of the

cartridge being stored in the memory element; and

a reading component for reading the data from the memory element, as a result of which

the image-forming apparatus makes it possible for the image-forming system to use the data so

read by the reading component to perform processing for awarding a prize to a user.

21. (original): A host apparatus in an image-forming system wherein an image-forming

apparatus and the host apparatus are mutually connected, a replaceable cartridge possessing a

memory element being installed in the image-forming apparatus, and lottery determination data

for determining whether something has been won being stored in the memory element, the host

apparatus comprising:

a prize awarding component that receives the results of a determination of whether

something has been won which is performed by the image-forming system based on lottery

determination data within the memory element, and that performs processing for awarding a

prize to a user in correspondence to the results of this determination when those results indicate

that something has been won.

22. (original): A host apparatus in an image-forming system wherein an image-forming

apparatus and the host apparatus are mutually connected, a replaceable cartridge possessing a

memory element being installed in the image-forming apparatus, and prize data, being a prize

itself or data for obtaining a prize from a prescribed prize awarding organization, being stored in

the memory element, the image-forming system performing a determination of whether

something has been won in connection with use of the image-forming apparatus or the host

apparatus, the host apparatus comprising:

a prize awarding component that receives the results of the determination of whether

something has been won from the image-forming system and uses prize data read from the

memory element by the image-forming apparatus to perform processing for awarding a prize to a user when the results of that determination indicate that something has been won.

23. (original): A host apparatus in an image-forming system wherein an image-forming apparatus and the host apparatus are mutually connected, a replaceable cartridge possessing a memory element being installed in the image-forming apparatus, and usage data indicating an amount of use to date of the image-forming apparatus or the cartridge being stored in the memory element, the host apparatus comprising:

   a prize awarding component that performs processing for awarding a prize to a user in correspondence to usage data read from the cartridge memory element by the image-forming apparatus.

24. (original): A host apparatus in an image-forming system wherein an image-forming apparatus and the host apparatus are mutually connected, a replaceable cartridge possessing a memory element being installed in the image-forming apparatus, and data which comprises at least one species selected from among the group consisting of a URL of a network site which awards a prize, a keyword or password which must be supplied to a prescribed prize awarding organization in order obtain a prize, image-forming apparatus driver information serving as a prize itself, and image data serving as a prize itself in consideration for use of the cartridge being stored in the cartridge memory element, the host apparatus comprising:

a prize awarding component that uses data read from the memory element by the image-

forming apparatus to perform processing for awarding a prize to a user.

25. (currently amended):   A cartridge, capable of being replaceably installed in an image-

forming apparatus in an image-forming system wherein a host apparatus and the image-forming

apparatus are mutually connected, comprising:

a memory element in which lottery determination data for determining whether

something has been won is stored;

as a result of which the cartridge makes it possible for the image-forming system to read

the lottery determination data from the memory element, use the lottery determination data so

read to determine whether something has been won, and perform processing for awarding a prize

to a user in correspondence to the results of that determination when those results indicate that

something has been won.

26. (currently amended):   A cartridge, capable of being replaceably installed in an image-

forming apparatus in an image-forming system wherein a host apparatus and the image-forming

apparatus are mutually connected, comprising:

a memory element in which prize data, being a prize itself or data for obtaining the prize

from a prescribed prize awarding organization external to the image-forming system, is stored;

as a result of which the cartridge makes it possible for the image-forming system to

determine whether something has been won in connection with use of the image-forming

apparatus or the host apparatus, and to read the prize data and use that prize data to perform

processing for awarding a prize to a user when the results of that determination indicate that

something has been won.

27. (currently amended):   A cartridge, capable of being replaceably installed in an image-

forming apparatus in an image-forming system wherein a host apparatus and the image-forming

apparatus are mutually connected, comprising:

a memory element in which usage data indicating an amount of use to date of the image-

forming apparatus or the cartridge is stored;

as a result of which the cartridge makes it possible for the image-forming system to read

the usage data from the cartridge memory element and perform processing for awarding a prize

to a user in correspondence to the usage data so read.

28. (currently amended):   A cartridge, capable of being replaceably installed in an image-

forming apparatus in an image-forming system wherein a host apparatus and the image-forming

apparatus are mutually connected, comprising:

a memory element in which data which comprises at least one species selected from

among the group consisting of a URL of a network site which awards a prize, a keyword or

password which must be supplied to a prescribed prize awarding organization in order obtain a

prize, image-forming apparatus driver information serving as a prize itself, and image data

serving as a prize itself in consideration for use of the cartridge is stored;

as a result of which the cartridge makes it possible for the image-forming system to read

the data from the cartridge memory element and to use the data so read to perform processing for

awarding a prize to a user.

29. (original): A method for providing a benefit to a user, by employing a cartridge capable of

being replaceably installed in an image-forming apparatus, lottery determination data for

determining whether something has been won being stored in a memory element of the cartridge,

the method comprising:

a reading step wherein the lottery determination data is read from the memory element;

a lottery determination step wherein lottery determination data read at the reading step is

used to determine whether something has been won; and

a prize awarding step wherein processing for awarding a prize to a user is performed in

correspondence to the results of a determination carried out at the lottery determination step

when the results of such determination indicate that something has been won.

30. (original): A method for providing a benefit to a user, by employing a cartridge capable of

being replaceably installed in an image-forming apparatus in an image-forming system wherein a

host apparatus and the image-forming apparatus are mutually connected, and wherein prize data,

being a prize itself or data for obtaining a prize from a prescribed prize awarding organization, is

stored in a memory element of the cartridge, the method comprising

a lottery determination step wherein a determination of whether something has been won

in connection with use of the image-forming apparatus or the host apparatus is performed;

a prize data reading step wherein the prize data is read when the results of a

determination carried out at the lottery determination step indicate that something has been won;

and

a prize awarding step wherein the prize data read at the prize data reading step is used to

perform processing for awarding a prize to a user when the results of a determination carried out

at the lottery determination step indicate that something has been won.

31. (original): A method for providing a benefit to a user, by employing a cartridge capable of

being replaceably installed in an image-forming apparatus, usage data indicating an amount of

use to date of the image-forming apparatus or the cartridge being stored in a memory element of

the cartridge, the method comprising:

a reading step wherein the usage data is read from the memory element; and

a prize awarding step wherein processing for awarding a prize to a user is performed in

correspondence to the usage data read at the reading step.

32. (original): A method for providing a benefit to a user, by employing a cartridge capable of

being replaceably installed in an image-forming apparatus in an image-forming system wherein a

host apparatus and the image-forming apparatus are mutually connected, and wherein data which

comprises at least one species selected from among the group consisting of a URL of a network

site which awards a prize, a keyword or password which must be supplied to a prescribed prize

awarding organization, image-forming apparatus driver information serving as a prize itself, and

image data serving as a prize itself in consideration for use of the cartridge being stored in a

memory element of the cartridge, the method comprising:

      a reading step wherein the data is read from the memory element; and

      a prize awarding step wherein the data read at the reading step is used to perform

processing for awarding a prize to a user.

33. (currently amended):   A computer program product for a host apparatus in an image-

forming system, wherein an image-forming apparatus and the host apparatus are mutually

connected, a replaceable cartridge possessing a memory element being installed in the image-

forming apparatus, and lottery determination data for determining whether something has been

won being stored in the memory element, the computer program product comprising:

      a computer readable memory storing program codes for causing the host apparatus to

execute processing for receiving the results of a determination of whether something has been

won which is performed by the image-forming system based on lottery determination data within

the cartridge memory element, and for awarding a prize to a user in correspondence to the results

of this determination when those results indicate that something has been won.

34. (currently amended):   A computer program product for a host apparatus in an image-   .

forming system, wherein an image-forming apparatus and the host apparatus are mutually

connected, a replaceable cartridge possessing a memory element being installed in the image-

forming apparatus, and prize data, being a prize itself or data for obtaining a prize from a

prescribed prize awarding organization, being stored in the cartridge memory element, the

image-forming system performing a determination of whether something has been won in

connection with use of the image-forming apparatus or the host apparatus, the computer program

product comprising:

a computer readable memory storing program codes for causing the host apparatus to

execute processing for receiving the results of the determination of whether something has been

won from the image-forming system and for using prize data read from the memory element by

the image-forming apparatus to award a prize to a user when the results of that determination

indicate that something has been won.

35. (currently amended):   A computer program product for a host apparatus in an image-

forming system, wherein an image-forming apparatus and the host apparatus are mutually

connected, a replaceable cartridge possessing a memory element being installed in the image-

forming apparatus, usage data indicating an amount of use to date of the image-forming

apparatus or the cartridge being stored in that cartridge memory element, the computer program

product comprising:

a computer readable memory storing program codes for causing the host apparatus to

execute processing for awarding a prize to a user in correspondence to usage data read from the

cartridge memory element by the image-forming apparatus.

36. (currently amended):   A computer program product for a host apparatus in an image-

forming system, wherein an image-forming apparatus and the host apparatus are mutually

connected, a replaceable cartridge possessing a memory element being installed in the image-

forming apparatus, data which comprises at least one species selected from among the group

consisting of a URL of a network site which awards a prize, a keyword or password which must

be supplied to a prescribed prize awarding organization, image-forming apparatus driver

information serving as a prize itself, and image data serving as a prize itself in consideration for

use of the cartridge being stored in the cartridge memory element, the computer program product

comprising:

        a computer readable memory for storing program codes for causing the host apparatus to

execute processing for using data read from the cartridge memory element by the image-forming

apparatus to award a prize to a user.

37. (original): A cartridge for an image-forming apparatus, comprising:

        a memory element for storing user information for identifying a user of the image-

forming apparatus,

        wherein the user information is not stored in the memory element at the time of shipping

but is written thereto by the image-forming apparatus following installation thereof in the image-

forming apparatus,

as a result of which the cartridge makes it possible for an external user management

system accessing the user information stored in the memory element to identify a user of the

cartridge and perform processing for providing a benefit to the user so identified.

38. (original): An image-forming apparatus in which a cartridge having a memory element can

be removably installed, comprising:

      a user information acquisition component that acquires user information for identifying a

user of this image-forming apparatus; and

      a user information writing component that writes the user information to the cartridge

memory element following installation of the cartridge in the image-forming apparatus;

      as a result of which the image-forming apparatus makes it possible for an external user

management system accessing the user information stored in the cartridge memory element to

identify a user of the cartridge and perform processing for providing a benefit to the user so

identified.

39. (original): An image-forming apparatus in which a cartridge having a memory element can

be removably installed, comprising:

      a user information acquisition component that acquires user information for identifying a

user of this image-forming apparatus;

a cartridge information reading component that reads cartridge information for

identifying the cartridge from the cartridge memory element following installation of the

cartridge in the image-forming apparatus; and

a notification component that notifies an external user management system of the user

information and the cartridge information;

as a result of which the image-forming apparatus makes it possible for the user

management system to identify the user and perform processing for providing a benefit to the

user so identified.

40. (original): An image-forming apparatus cartridge recovery method comprising:

a step wherein a used cartridge is recovered;

a step wherein information is acquired for identifying a user of the cartridge from an

image-forming apparatus in which the cartridge is or was installed or from a memory element of

the cartridge so recovered;

a step wherein a user of the cartridge is identified from the information so acquired; and

a step wherein processing is performed for providing a benefit to the user so identified.

41. (original): A method for providing information in online processing fashion from an

information-providing server in correspondence to a request from a client connected so as to

permit communication with an image-forming apparatus in which a cartridge equipped with a

memory element is replaceably installed, the method comprising:

(a) a step wherein the client uses information stored in the memory element to connect to

the information-providing server or to gain access to information thereon;

(b) a step wherein the client sends printing environment information indicating a printing

environment of the image-forming apparatus to the information-providing server; and

(c) a step wherein the information-providing server sends printing execution information

capable of being used to execute printing at the image-forming apparatus connected so as to

permit communication with the client to the client in correspondence to information sent to the

information-providing server.

42. (currently amended):   The~~A~~ method for providing information according to claim 41

wherein the printing execution information comprises control software used by the client or an

apparatus connected so as to permit communication with the client during printing using the

cartridge.

43. (currently amended):   ~~A~~The method for providing information according to claim 41

wherein the printing execution information comprises printing data for supply to the image-

forming apparatus.

44. (currently amended):   The~~A~~ method for providing information according to claim 41

wherein the step (c) further comprises a step wherein information related to a cartridge capable

of being used by the image-forming apparatus is provided to a user of the client.

45. (currently amended):   ~~A~~The method for providing information according to any one of

claims 41 through 44 wherein

    the information stored in the memory element comprises a password that will allow the

client to gain permission to access information on the information-providing server; and

    the step (a) further comprises a step wherein the client uses the password to connect to

the information-providing server or to gain access to information thereon.

46. (currently amended):   The~~A~~ method for providing information according to claim 45

wherein the information on the information-providing server that the user is permitted to access

varies in correspondence to the password.

47. (original): A method for providing information in online processing fashion from an

information-providing server in correspondence to a request from a client connected so as to

permit communication with an image-forming apparatus in which a cartridge equipped with a

memory element is installed, the method comprising:

    a step wherein printing environment information indicating a printing environment of the

image-forming apparatus is received from the client; and

    a step wherein printing execution information capable of being used to execute printing at

the image-forming apparatus connected so as to permit communication with the client is sent to

the client in correspondence to information sent to the information-providing server.

48. (original): A method for acquiring information in online processing fashion from an

information-providing server, comprising:

a step wherein information stored in a memory element provided in a cartridge installed

in an image-forming apparatus connected so as to permit communication with an information

acquiring apparatus is used to connect to the information-providing server;

a step wherein printing environment information indicating a printing environment of the

image-forming apparatus is sent to the information-providing server; and

a step wherein printing execution information sent from the information-providing server

and capable of being used to execute printing at the image-forming apparatus is acquired in

correspondence to information sent to the information-providing server.

49. (original): An information-providing apparatus that provides information in online

processing fashion from an information-providing server in correspondence to a request from a

client connected so as to permit communication with an image-forming apparatus in which a

cartridge equipped with a memory element is installed, the information-providing apparatus

comprising:

an information receiving component that receives printing environment information

indicating a printing environment of the image-forming apparatus from the client; and

an information sending component that sends printing execution information capable of

being used to execute printing at the image-forming apparatus connected so as to permit

communication with the client to the client in correspondence to information sent to the

information-providing server.

50. (original): An information acquiring apparatus that acquires information in online processing

fashion from an information-providing server, comprising:

an information-providing server connection component that uses information stored in a

memory element provided in a cartridge installed in an image-forming apparatus connected so as

to permit communication with an information acquiring apparatus to connect to the information-

providing server;

an information sending component that sends printing environment information

indicating a printing environment of the image-forming apparatus to the information-providing

server; and

an information acquiring component that acquires printing execution information capable

of being used to execute printing at the image-forming apparatus in correspondence to

information sent to the information-providing server.

51. (currently amended):   A computer program <u>product</u> for causing a computer to provide

information in online processing fashion from an information-providing server in

correspondence to a request from a client connected so as to permit communication with an

image-forming apparatus in which a cartridge equipped with a memory element is installed, the

computer program <u>product</u> comprising <u>a computer readable memory storing</u>:

program codes for receiving printing environment information indicating a printing

environment of the image-forming apparatus, from the client; and

program codes for sending printing execution information capable of being used to

execute printing at the image-forming apparatus connected so as to permit communication with

the client, to the client in correspondence to information sent to the information-providing server.

52. (currently amended):　　A computer program product for causing a computer to acquire

information in online processing fashion from an information-providing server, the computer

program product comprising a computer readable memory storing:

program codes for connecting to the information-providing server by using information

stored in a memory element provided in a cartridge installed in an image-forming apparatus

connected so as to permit communication with the computer;

program codes for sending printing environment information indicating a printing

environment of the image-forming apparatus, to the information-providing server; and

program codes for acquiring printing execution information capable of being used

to execute printing at the image-forming apparatus, in correspondence to information sent to the

information-providing server.